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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council decides to remain involved in Cyprus question and asks Secretary-General to keep it informed of efforts to reach agreement.

+ Agreement to establish impartial pre-transitional council in Afghanistan, as soon as possible, announced by Secretary-General; agreement also reached to hold international conference under United Nations auspices to end civil war in that country.

+ Secretary-General comments on developments concerning Afghanistan, Libya, Western Sahara, among other issues, during Geneva press conference.

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The Security Council this afternoon decided to remain involved in the Cyprus question "on an ongoing and direct basis" and called on the Secretary-General to keep the Council informed of his efforts to promote the achievements of an overall framework agreement and report by July.

The Council took that action by its unanimous adoption of resolution 750 (1992), which endorsed a set of ideas containing elements of a fair solution as outlined in the Secretary-General's report. It said those ideas would be an appropriate basis for reaching agreement, subject to the work to be done on such outstanding issues as territorial adjustments and displaced persons.

The set of ideas, which emerged from talks in 1991 between representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and the Greek and Turkish Governments, incorporates the understanding that Cyprus is the common home of the two communities, each a federated state. The text states, among other things, that the solution must respect the cultural, religious, social and linguistic identity of each community.

By today's decision, the Council called on the parties concerned to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in clarifying without delay the outstanding issues and to hold a high-level international meeting to conclude an overall framework agreement.

(more)

In his report to the Council dated 3 April, the Secretary-General warned that "lack of progress" by the two sides in concluding an agreement on Cyprus, and the increasing dissatisfaction of the troop-contributing Governments of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) "make it unlikely that the United Nations will be able for much longer to maintain a peace-keeping presence" in the island on the present scale.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced today that agreement in principle had been reached, with the Afghan parties and governments involved to establish a pre-transitional council in Afghanistan composed of impartial personalities to which all powers and all executive authority would be transferred.

During a week-long visit to Geneva, the Secretary-General issued a statement saying an Afghan gathering would be organized as early as possible for the purpose of working out the arrangements for the transition period and an interim mechanism, leading to the establishment of a Government in Kabul through free and fair elections. Immediately after the formation of the interim government, the council would transfer all powers and executive authority to that body.

According to the statement, an understanding had been reached that once the council assumed power in Kabul, there would be a cessation of hostilities, a declaration of general amnesty to all concerned, guarantees of safety and security for all Afghans, respect of human rights, protection of property, and an opening of all major routes for commercial traffic, particularly for humanitarian commodities.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali stressed that with the cooperation of all Governments, the Afghan people would be able to establish an elected Government, thus bringing peace to the war-torn country. He added that the process would also encourage the more than five million refugees to return to Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General's Personal Representative in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Benon Sevan, has been holding intensive consultations with all segments of the Afghan people, including political leaders, mujahideen commanders and religious leaders based inside Afghanistan, as well as Afghans currently residing outside the region.

On 18 March, Afghan President Najibullah agreed that once an understanding was reached through the United Nations for the establishment of an interim government in Kabul, all powers and all executive authority would be transferred to that government.

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The Secretary-General today expressed satisfaction that his proposal for convening an Afghan gathering had received the support of the vast majority of the Afghans consulted.

(more)

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva this morning, Mr. Boutros-Ghali also announced that the former Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Francis Blanchard, would prepare a position paper for the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on a "new approach to reinforce the cooperation among the different agencies".

The Secretary-General disclosed that he had been in contact with the representatives of the Libyan Government and would meet with them later today. The topics discussed, he said, included proposals to deliver the two Libyans accused of the downing of Pam Am flight 103 to the Security Council through the League of Arab States. The United Nations would hand them over to a neutral country. He added that the International Court of Justice would make its ruling by 14 April -- a day before the deadline set by the Security Council for the arms and air embargo against Libya.

In response to correspondents' questions, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said he had received a report from Jan Eliasson, his Special Coordinator on Humanitarian Assistance, who had recently returned from a mission to Bangladesh and Myanmar. During his visits to Yangon and Dhaka, the Coordinator had reached an agreement for the repatriation of the more than 200,000 refugees who had sought sanctuary in Bangladesh.

Regarding the question of Western Sahara, the Secretary-General said his newly appointed Special Representative for that region, Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, would travel on a mission to Morocco in the coming weeks for meetings with representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO).

The Secretary-General was scheduled to meet today with the Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina; the Foreign Minister of Libya; Carlos Alzamora, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Compensation Commission, and Ilter Turkmen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Mr. Boutros-Ghali will travel to Berne on Monday, 13 April, before leaving Switzerland for China on 14 April.

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